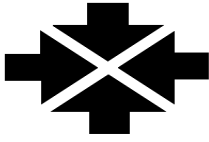


NJUG



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NJUG Welcomes the Report from the Local Government and Transport Committee.

The Local Government and Transport Committee yesterday published its Report following an Inquiry into the Transport (Scotland) Bill.

The key recommendations included:

1. The Executive to consider how a 'level playing field' can be achieved in relation to fines imposed under the Bill
2. A balance to be struck between the proposals in the Bill to restrict road works and provide customers with essential utility services.
3. The Minister to provide reassurances that road authorities will not be able to use powers of reinstatement to make overly onerous demands on utility companies to resurface sections of roads not disrupted by road works.

Welcoming the report, Frank Stewart said "the recommendation to introduce a level playing field is an important step forward. NJUG have never disputed that road works need to be better co-ordinated, but have consistently maintained this would be difficult if all of those responsible for road works were not treated equally in the eyes of the law".

"After all, road works authorities themselves are responsible for half of all road works, which altogether cause 10% of congestion, the remainder due to volume of traffic and incidents. As independent research published last week proved, utility companies themselves are not responsible for costing the economy as much in terms of congestion as the Scottish Executive and UK Government originally believed. We are delighted that the Committee recognises this.

"NJUG encourage the Executive to respond to the Local Government and Transport Committee accordingly by amending the Transport (Scotland) Bill in light of its recommendations"

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Members of the National Joint Utilities Group are: National Grid Transco, THUS plc, BT, Water UK, Telewest, Energy Networks Association, NTL, Cable & Wireless
2. For further details please contact: Frank Stewart, NJUG Board Chairman or Harry Pendleton, NJUG Management Committee Chair on 020 7233 7377.
3. Professor Phil Goodwin published an independent academic study into the cost of traffic congestion caused by utility companies 8th February 2005. He is Professor of Transport Policy at the Centre for Transport and Society, University of West of England, Bristol, and Emeritus Professor at University College London. He was formerly Director of the ESRC Transport Studies Unit at Oxford University, Head of the Centre for Transport Studies at UCL, a member of the government's advisory committee on trunk road appraisal, an adviser to the House of Commons Transport Committee, and Chair of the Deputy Prime Minister's advisory committee for the 1998 Transport White Paper.